The Illustrated Standard of the Bernese Mountain Dog

Origins of the Bernese Mountain Dog

No study of any breed of dog can be comprehensive unless it is accompanied by an understanding of the origin and utility of that breed. The purpose for which a dog was developed must affect character, structure, and movement, all qualities that a conformation judge is asked to evaluate. So it is that a brief historical background of the Bernese Mountain Dog is presented here, to be kept in mind as the dogs are examined.

The Bernese is one of the four breeds of Sennenhunde, working dogs having their origins in farm areas of Switzerland. All of the Sennenhunde (the other three are the Appenzell, the Entelbuch, and the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog) are tricolored animals sharing similar markings, but only the Bernese is characterized by a somewhat long coat. It is named for the Canton of Bern, where most examples of the breed were concentrated in the last part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries, when Swiss dog fanciers became attracted to the native dogs.

As far as is known, the Bernese were used as general purpose farm dogs. Their work involved driving cattle, for which a large, calm natured dog was suited. They pulled carts laden with milk products and other items to market, work requiring a sturdy constitution and an independent nature. They were watchdogs around the farms and with the herds, an activity that fostered self-confidence. They lived with their people and were devoted to them.

Bernese Mountain Dogs are hardy, not bothered by the cold and snow. They are natural dogs, in the sense that they are not surgically altered by docking or cropping. They are working dogs, not changed by development of too much coat or otherwise transformed in ways more suitable to the show ring than to the farm.

The Bernese Mountain Dog Standard

The first standard for Bernese Mountain Dogs to be used by the American Kennel Club was adopted in 1937, when the breed was first recognized in this country. A revision was adopted by the AKC on July 8, 1980, and a second revision went into effect on March 28, 1990. The last is, of course, the standard that is examined here.

It is suggested that the entire standard be read first, followed by a subject by subject examination.

THE STANDARD OF THE BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG

General Appearance

The Bernese Mountain Dog is a striking, tri-colored, large dog. He is sturdy and balanced. He is intelligent, strong and agile enough to do the draft and droving work for which he was used in the mountainous regions of his origin. Dogs appear masculine, while bitches are distinctly feminine.

Size, Proportion, Substance

Measured at the withers, dogs are 25 to 27 ½ inches; bitches are 23 to 26 inches. Though appearing square, Bernese Mountain Dogs are slightly longer in body than they are tall. Sturdy bone is of great importance. The body is full.

Head

Expression is intelligent, animated and gentle. The ***eyes*** are dark brown and slightly oval in shape with close fitting eyelids. Inverted or everted eyelids are serious faults. Blue eye color is a disqualification. The ***ears*** are medium sized, set high, triangular in shape, gently rounded at the tip, and hang close to the head when in repose. When the Bernese Mountain Dog is alert, the ears are brought forward and raised at the base; the top of the ear is level with the top of the skull. The ***skull*** is flat on top and broad, with a slight furrow and a well defined, but not exaggerated stop. The ***muzzle*** is strong and straight. The ***nose*** is always black. The ***lips*** are clean and, as the Bernese Mountain Dog is a drymouthed breed, the flews are only slightly developed. The ***teeth*** meet in a scissors bite. An overshot or undershot bite is a serious fault. Dentition is complete.

Neck, Topline, Body

The ***neck*** is strong, muscular and of medium length. The ***topline*** is level from the withers to the croup. The ***chest*** is deep and capacious with well-sprung, but not barrel-shaped, ribs and brisket reaching at least to the elbows. The back is broad and firm. The ***loin*** is strong. The ***croup*** is broad and smoothly rounded to the tail insertion. The ***tail*** is bushy. It should be carried low when in repose. An upward swirl is permissible when the dog is alert, but the tail may never curl or be carried over the back. The bones in the tail should feel straight and should reach to the hock joint or below. A kink in the tail is a fault.

Forequarters

The shoulders are moderately laid back, flat-lying, well-muscled and never loose. The ***legs*** are straight and strong and the ***elbows*** are well under the shoulder when the dog is standing. The ***pasterns*** slope very slightly, but are never weak. ***Dewclaws*** may be removed. The ***feet*** are round and compact with well-arched toes.

Hindquarters

The ***thighs*** are broad, strong and muscular. The ***stifles*** are moderately bent and taper smoothly into the hocks. The ***hocks*** are well let down and straight as viewed from the rear. ***Dewclaws*** should be removed. ***Feet*** are compact and turn neither in nor out.

Coat

The ***coat*** is thick, moderately long and slightly wavy or straight. It has a bright natural sheen. Extremely curly or extremely dull-looking coats are undesirable. The Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in natural coat and undue trimming is to be discouraged.

Color and Markings

The Bernese Mountain Dog is tri-colored. The ground color is jet black. The markings are rich rust and clear white. Symmetry of markings is desired. Rust appears over each eye, on the cheeks reaching to at least the corner of the mouth, on each side of the chest, on all four legs, and under the tail. There is a white blaze and muzzle band. A white marking on the chest typically forms an inverted cross. The tip of the tail is white. White on the feet is desired but must not extend higher than the pasterns. Markings other than described are to be faulted in direct relationship to the extent of the deviation. White legs or a white collar are serious faults. Any ground color other than black is a disqualification.

Gait

The natural working gait of the Bernese Mountain Dog is a slow trot. However, in keeping with his use in draft and droving work, he is capable of speed and agility. There is good reach in front. Powerful drive from the rear is transmitted through a level back. There is no wasted action. Front and rear legs on each side follow through in the same plane. At increased speed, legs tend to converge toward the center line.

Temperament

The ***temperament*** is self-confident, alert and good-natured, never sharp or shy. The Bernese Mountain Dog should stand steady, though may remain aloof to the attentions of strangers.

Disqualifications

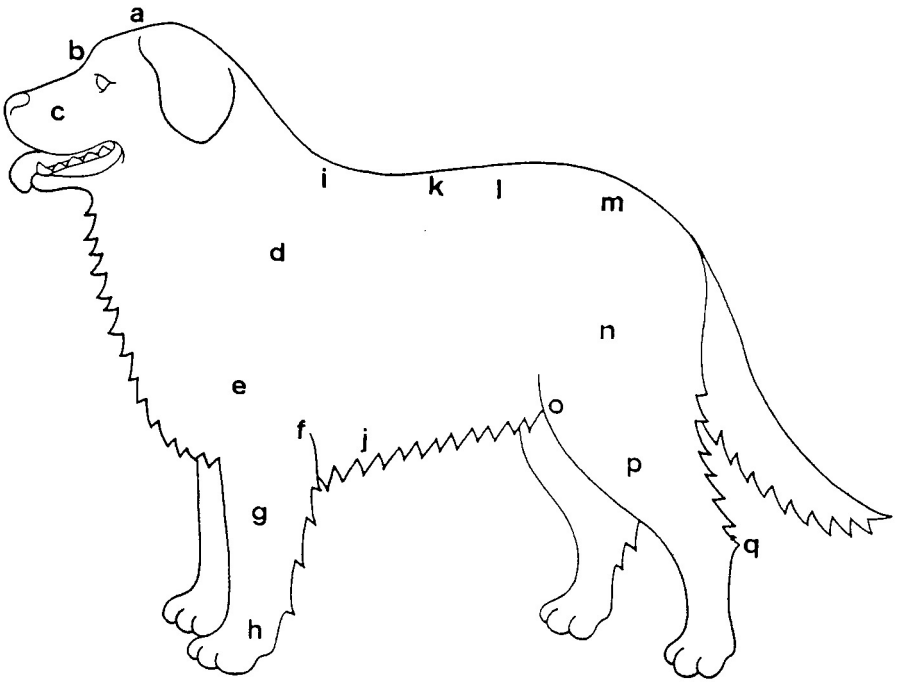
Blue eye color.

Any ground color other than black.

ANATOMY

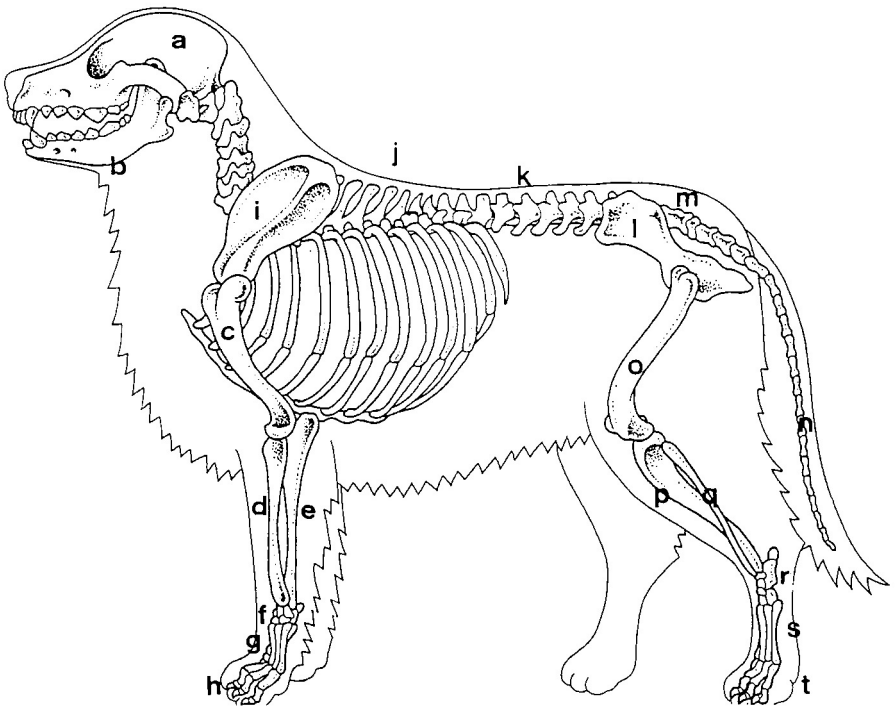
Key to Outline Figure

a. skull
b. stop
c. muzzle
d. shoulder
e. upper arm
f. elbow
g. forearm
h. pastern
i. withers
j. brisket
k. back
l. loin
m. croup
n. thigh
o. stifle
p. shank
q. hock



Key to Skeleton Figure

a. skull
b. mandible
c. humerus
d. radius
e. ulna
f. carpal bones
g. metacarpals
h. phalanges
i. scapula
j. thoracic vertebrae
k. lumbar vertebrae
l. pelvis
m. sacral vertebrae
n. caudal vertebrae
o. femur
p. tibia
q. fibula
r. tarsal bones
s. metatarsals
t. phalanges

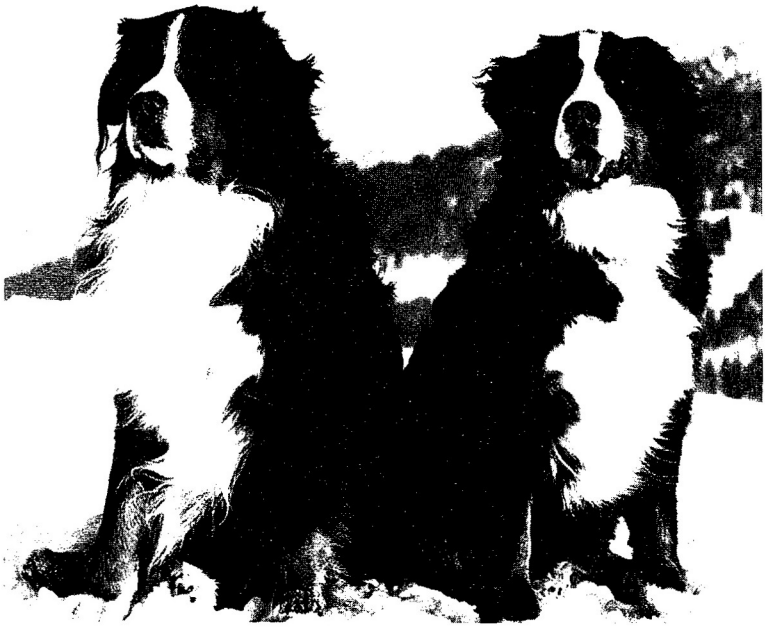


GENERAL APPEARANCE

The first three sentences of the standard describing overall appearance must be kept in mind throughout. The striking appearance results from a combination of size, solid structure and self-confident nature with the beautiful coat and markings.

The Standard:

The Bernese Mountain Dog is a striking, tri-colored, large dog. He is sturdy and balanced. He is intelligent, strong and agile enough to do the draft and droving work for which he was used in the mountainous regions of his origin.



The gender of a Bernese dog and bitch should be apparent

The first glance should tell whether the dog is male or female. A correct male is indeed an imposing animal. A female is striking but has a less commanding demeanor. Sexual differences include the larger size, bulkier body, usually broader head and heavier coat, especially with a well developed ruff over the chest, in the male. Males must not be bitchy nor females doggy.

The Standard:

Dogs appear masculine, while bitches are distinctly feminine.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

The Standard:

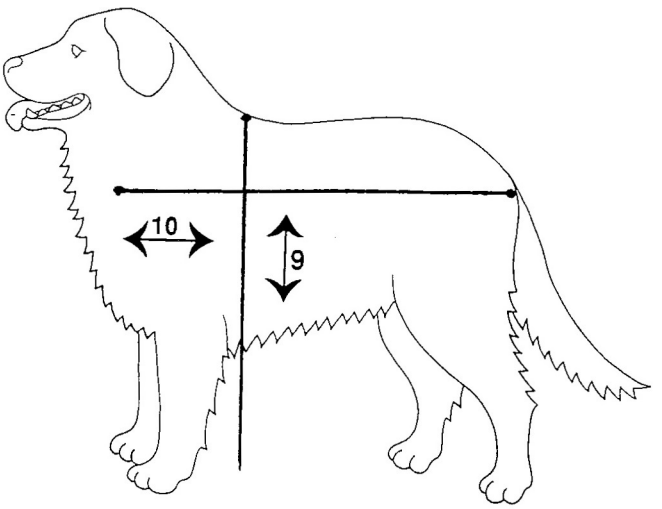
Measured at the withers, dogs are 25 to 27½ inches; bitches are 23 to 26 inches. Though appearing square, Bernese Mountain Dogs are slightly longer in body than they are tall. Sturdy bone is of great importance. The body is full.

The correct ratio of height to length is about 9:10. With these proportions the dog will be balanced both standing and in motion.

Dogs over, or under, recommended size should be faulted in direct proportion to their deviation.

Sturdy bone is of great importance. The body is full.

Notice that this is the second use in the standard of the word "sturdy." A Bernese Mountain Dog must have good mass of bone and a broad, strong framework. The sturdy dog is solid and muscular, not flabby and fat.



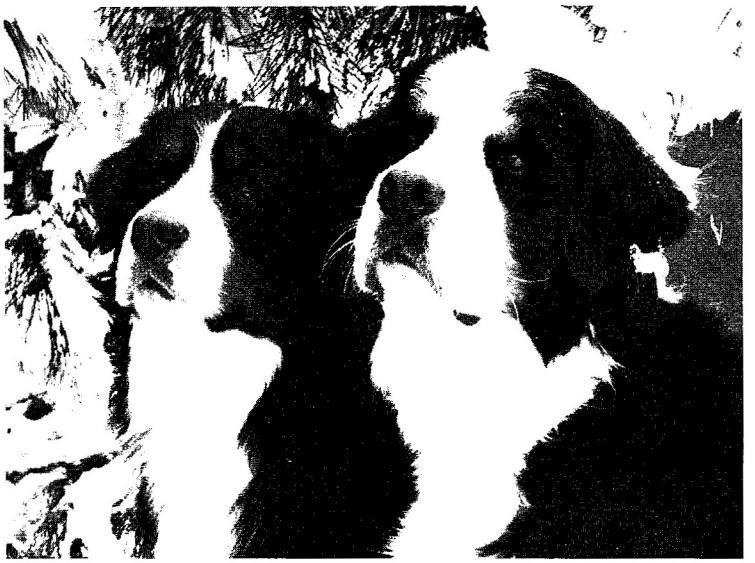
A proportion of 9 high to 10 long is desirable

HEAD

The Standard:

Expression ***is intelligent, animated and gentle.***

While these three features of expression mark a Bernese, it is obvious that differences in character affect expression. Some dogs may be more outgoing than others; some are comics, others more serious. These attitudes will show in their expression. Still an overall breed character of self-confidence, interest, and temperance will be noted in the expression.



Bernese Mountain Dogs should have an air of self confidence.

The darker brown the eyes, the better. Yellow eyes, and round, bulging eyes that spoil the typical gentle expression are undesirable.

Round eyes spoil the expression. This dog's ears are also set too low.

Eyes that show red haw or that look inflamed and unhealthy may indicate highly undesirable abnormal conditions of the eyelids.

Blue eye color is a disqualification. Whereas blue eyes occur occasionally in Bernese Mountain Dogs, they are atypical of true breed type and disqualify the dog. Some newborn pups may show a medium to navy blue or a flinty gray eye color when their eyes open. This generally turns to brown within a few weeks. If a blue eye occurs, it is icy blue in color and readily apparent.

The Standard:

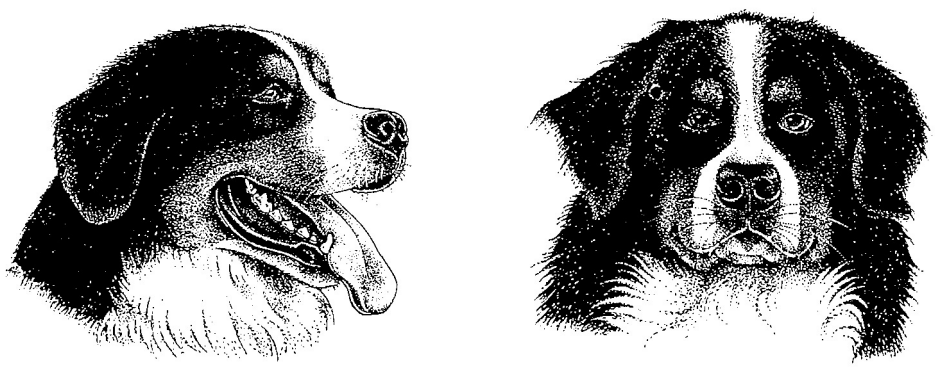
The eyes *are dark brown and slightly oval in shape with close fitting eyelids. Inverted or everted eyelids are serious faults. Blue eye color is a disqualification.*

The "set" of the ears is best evaluated when the dog is alerted. The ears are raised and brought forward.

Small or high-set ears are rarely a problem but are not, of course, correct. The tip of the ear should come about to the same level as the corner of the mouth, and not hang below the cheek. Long, low-set ears result in an incorrect hound-like appearance of the head, which should be discouraged.

The Standard:

The ears *are medium sized, set high, triangular in shape, gently rounded at the tip, and hang close to the head when in repose. When the Bernese Mountain Dog is alert, the ears are brought forward and raised at the base; the top of the ear is level with the top of the skull.*



When a Bernese is alert, the ears raise. This is the best way to determine whether the ear "set" is correct. The top of the ear should be level with the top of the skull (as the one on the right).

The Standard:

The skull *is flat on top and broad, with a slight furrow and a well defined, but not exaggerated stop. The* muzzle *is strong and straight. The* nose *is always black.*

The skull is broad but not coarse. It is balanced, with the cranium *slightly longer* than the muzzle. The stop is clearly present but not extreme. Viewed from the top, the muzzle tapers only slightly, but must not be snipy. The skull should be reminiscent of neither setter nor Saint.

The *nose* is always black.

The skull is flat on top and broad, with a slight furrow and a well defined stop.

This head is incorrect. The setter-like head is too fine, with too little stop. The muzzle is too long relative to skull length.

This head is also incorrect. It is a St. Bernard-like head, which is too coarse. The stop is too pronounced, the muzzle is relatively too short, and the flews are too loose.

The Standard:

The lips *are clean and, as the Bernese Mountain Dog is a drymouthed breed, the flews are only slightly developed.*

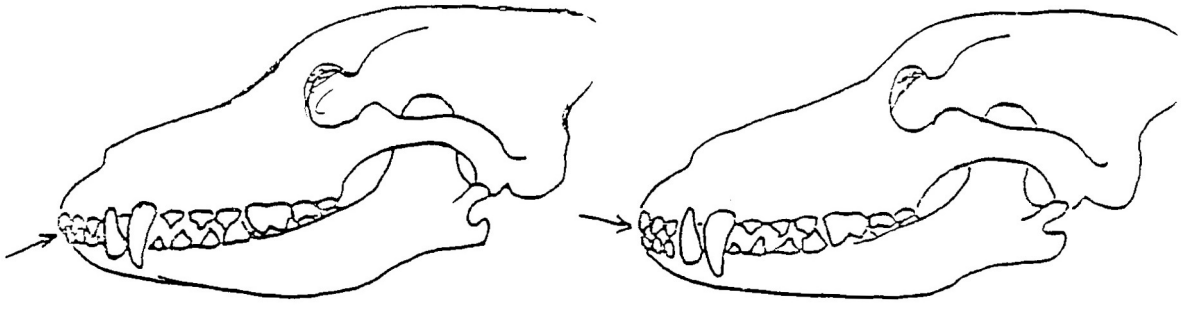
The lips are clean and, as the Bernese Mountain Dog is a drymouthed breed, the flews are only slightly developed.

The lips should not have a large droop at the side. It should be noted that some dogs, especially younger ones inexperienced at shows, may water at the mouth while being shown. This is due to their excitement in strange circumstances and should not be penalized.

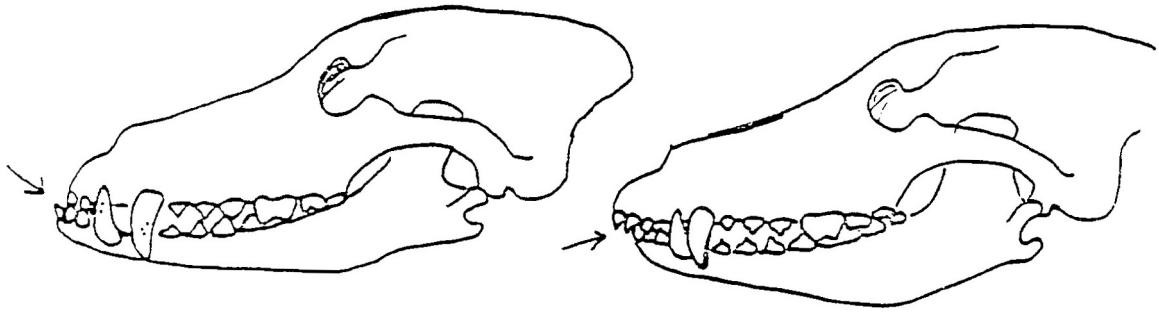
The teeth meet in a scissors bite. An overshot or undershot bite is a serious fault. Dentition is complete. A scissors bite is preferred. Level bites sometimes occur. Because a level bite may wear down the incisors, the level bite is not preferred but is not a fault as are over- and undershot bites.

The Standard:

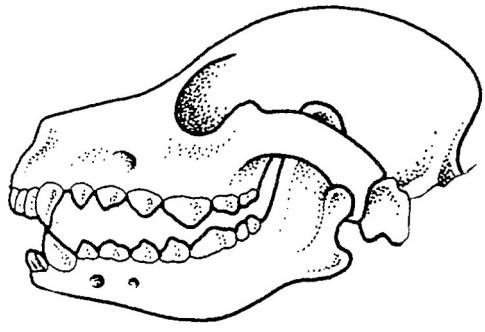
The teeth *meet in a scissors bite. An overshot or undershot bite is a serious fault. Dentition is complete.*



A Scissors Bite - preferred **A Level Bite - not a fault**



An Undershot Bite - a serious fault **An Overshot Bite - a serious fault**



Teeth should not be missing (42 teeth in all)

Please note that there are no disqualifications for bite faults. It is assumed that, as with other breeds, a wry mouth (one where the teeth do not mesh correctly)will be heavily faulted.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

The Standard:

The neck ***is strong, muscular and of medium length. The*** topline ***is level from the withers to the croup. The*** chest ***is deep and capacious with well-sprung, but not barrel-shaped, ribs and brisket reaching at least to the elbows. The back is broad and firm. The*** loin ***is strong.***

The strong neck must be in balance with body size, neither long and racy nor short and bull-like. The natural beauty of the balanced neck and body is best shown when the dog is on a loose lead.

The *topline* is level from the withers to the croup. In a natural stance, the back should neither sag in the middle nor slope down from high withers. It is important to observe the profile at least one time when the dog is not stacked, as topline faults are easily concealed by clever handling.

The *chest* is deep and capacious with well-sprung, but not barrel-shaped, ribs and brisket reaching at least to the elbows. The back is broad and firm. The *loin* is strong.

The solid, broad body and straight back provide the muscle power for these dogs when doing draft work.

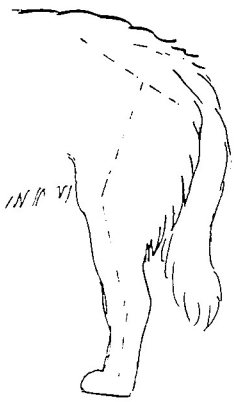
Correct body proportions shown in profile. There may appear to be a dip behind the withers; this is because the rump has more hair, making it seem high.

The Standard:

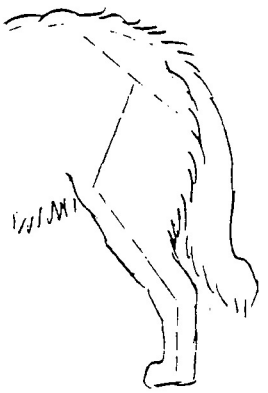
The croup ***is broad and smoothly rounded to the tail insertion.***

The *croup* is broad and smoothly rounded to the tail insertion.

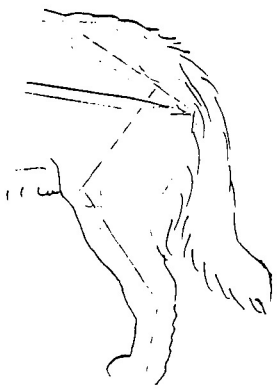
Neither flat-sided nor sloping, the strong, rounded croup matches the sturdy body . Tail insertion must be correctly located for tail carriage to be correct.



Croup a little too flat. Tail high. Poor angulation



Croup too steep; low tail set. Aslo, stifle a little straight.



Correct croup and tail insertion

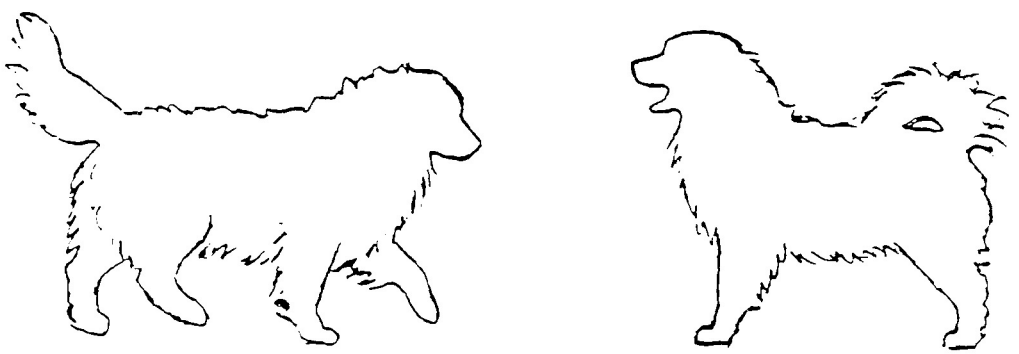
Correct tail insertion should lead to correct tail carriage. The tail may be carried high, though not ringed over the back, when the dog is moving, especially in males who are feeling proud. The incorrect tail carriage makes the dog look unbalanced and cut off in the rear.

The bones in the tail should feel straight and should reach to the hock joint or below. A kink in the tail is a fault.

The Standard:

The tail *is bushy. It should be carried low when in repose. An upward swirl is permissible when the dog is alert, but the tail may never curl or be carried over the back. The bones in the tail should feel straight and should reach to the hock joint or below. A kink in the tail is a fault.*

These characteristics can be examined by running the hand down the tail and checking tail length. The vertebrae of the tail should smoothly decrease in size and be in alignment. Incorrect alignment of the vertebrae (kinks) are easily felt on casual examination.



A raised tail (left) is acceptable with the dog at a slow trot. At right is an incorrectly carried tail, curled over the back.

FOREQUARTERS

The Standard:

The shoulders are moderately laid back, flat-lying, well-muscled and never loose.

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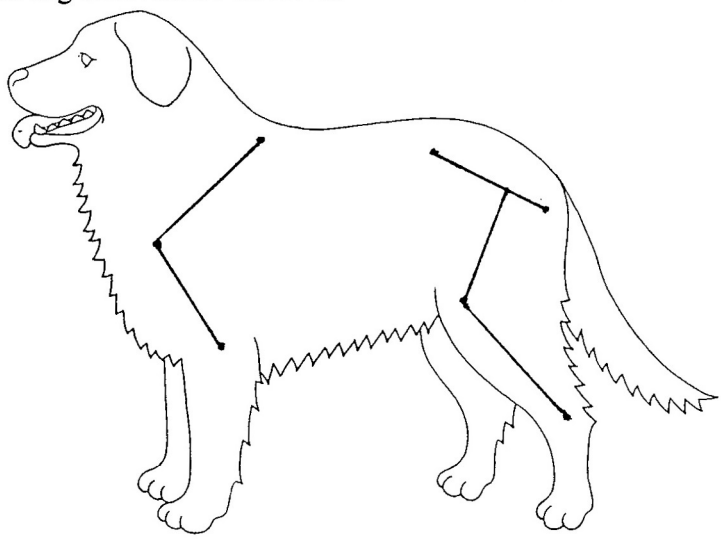
Shoulder angulation can be detected with the hands, and this combined with study of the dog's movement will reveal the correct condition.



Dog in profile showing correct angulation

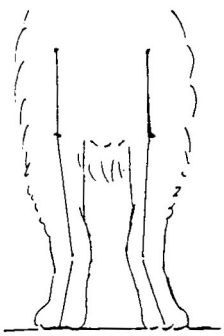
The Standard:

The legs *are straight and strong and the* elbows *are well under the shoulder when the dog is standing.*

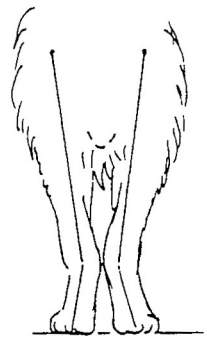
Straight, thick front legs provide part of the power for these draft dogs (Figure 31). Incorrect barrel chest may be combined with the equally incorrect condition of being out-at-the-elbows to produce a poor front assemblage. Legs that are not straight and narrow chests are weak.

A good front, showing elbows well under shoulders

A poor front, combining a barrel chest with being out at the elbows



A poor front, combining forearm inclined inward and toes inclined outward



A poor narrow chested front, legs not straight

Pasterns weak and too sloping. Toes are too long.

The *pasterns* slope very slightly, but are never weak.

Strong pasterns of moderate length provide part of the power for the front leg. Incorrect length and slope of pasterns may also be detected in sloppy movement.

Tight feet with well-arched toes will carry dogs easily over good distances on rough terrain.

The Standard:

The pasterns ***slope very slightly, but are never weak.*** Dewclaws ***may be removed. The*** feet ***are round and compact with well-arched toes.***

HINDQUARTERS

The *thighs* are broad, strong and muscular.

The rounded croup blends smoothly into the well developed thighs, providing a continuous group of strong muscles.

Poor angulation - too straight

The *stifles* are moderately bent and taper smoothly into the hocks.

Moderation is the important word for stifle angulation. Strictly straight stifles are not correct, but too much angulation does not provide an efficiently functioning unit in a draft dog, which pushes strongly with the hindquarters as well as pulling with the front.

The *hocks* are well let down and straight as viewed from the rear.

The Standard:

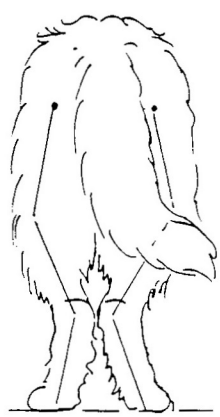
The thighs ***are broad, strong and muscular. The*** stifles ***are moderately bent and taper smoothly into the hocks. The*** hocks ***are well let down and straight as viewed from the rear.*** Dewclaws ***should be removed.*** Feet ***are compact and turn neither in nor out.***

Strong hocks are an important part of the rear drive assemblage. There must be no sign of the weakness that usually accompanies cow hocks.

Dewclaws **should be removed.** ***Feet*** **are compact and turn neither in nor out.**

Bernese Mountain Dogs have big feet, with high-arched toes and thick, tough pads.

Rear feet that turn out are not desirable, lacking the power needed in a draft dog.



A poor rear with cow hocks

A good rear with strong straight hocks

COAT

The Standard:

The coat ***is thick, moderately long and slightly wavy or straight. It has a bright natural sheen. Extremely curly or extremely dull-looking coats are undesirable. The Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in natural coat and undue trimming is to be discouraged.***

The *coat* is thick, moderately long and slightly wavy or straight. It has a bright natural sheen. Extremely curly or extremely dull-looking coats are undesirable.

The desired wavy or straight coat is weather resistant. It is composed of an outer coat with longer hair and a soft under coat. Tightly curled coats are not as functional as the desired slightly wavy or straight coats, as they tend to hold rain and snow.

Curls are frequently found along the topline in puppies, and a younger dog may have a more wavy, or even curlier, coat than it will have as an adult. Thus a very wavy or curly coat should not be penalized as heavily in an immature dog as in an adult. If in doubt, check the coat of a young dog on the sides of the chest, where it should be more nearly correct than on the topline.

The bright sheen of the coat is an important characteristic. Dull appearing coats may be a sign of poor health, or over-grooming!

The Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in natural coat and undue trimming is to be discouraged.

Outside of optional whisker cutting and making the feet and ears a little neater by removing long hair, no trimming is needed. The naturally magnificent coat requires no human intervention.

COLOR AND MARKINGS

The Standard:

The Bernese Mountain Dog is tri-colored. The ground color is jet black. The markings are rich rust and clear white. Symmetry of markings is desired.

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There is no ambiguity over the accepted colors of Bernese Mountain Dogs. The black body color is set off by rich rust and white. The quality of the rust shows some variation, but a rich color is to be preferred over a washed-out beige. The colors should be clean and clearly separated, not melding into one another.

Striking markings are a hallmark of Bernese Mountain Dogs. We have found, however, that they give some problems to judges. Not all markings mentioned are of equal importance and, as stated later in this section, less than ideal markings must be faulted only in relation to their deviation from the ideal.

The Standard:

Rust appears over each eye, on the cheeks reaching to at least the corner of the mouth, on each side of the chest, on all four legs, and under the tail.

Rust appears over each eye, on the cheeks reaching to at least the corner of the mouth, on each side of the chest, on all four legs, and under the tail.

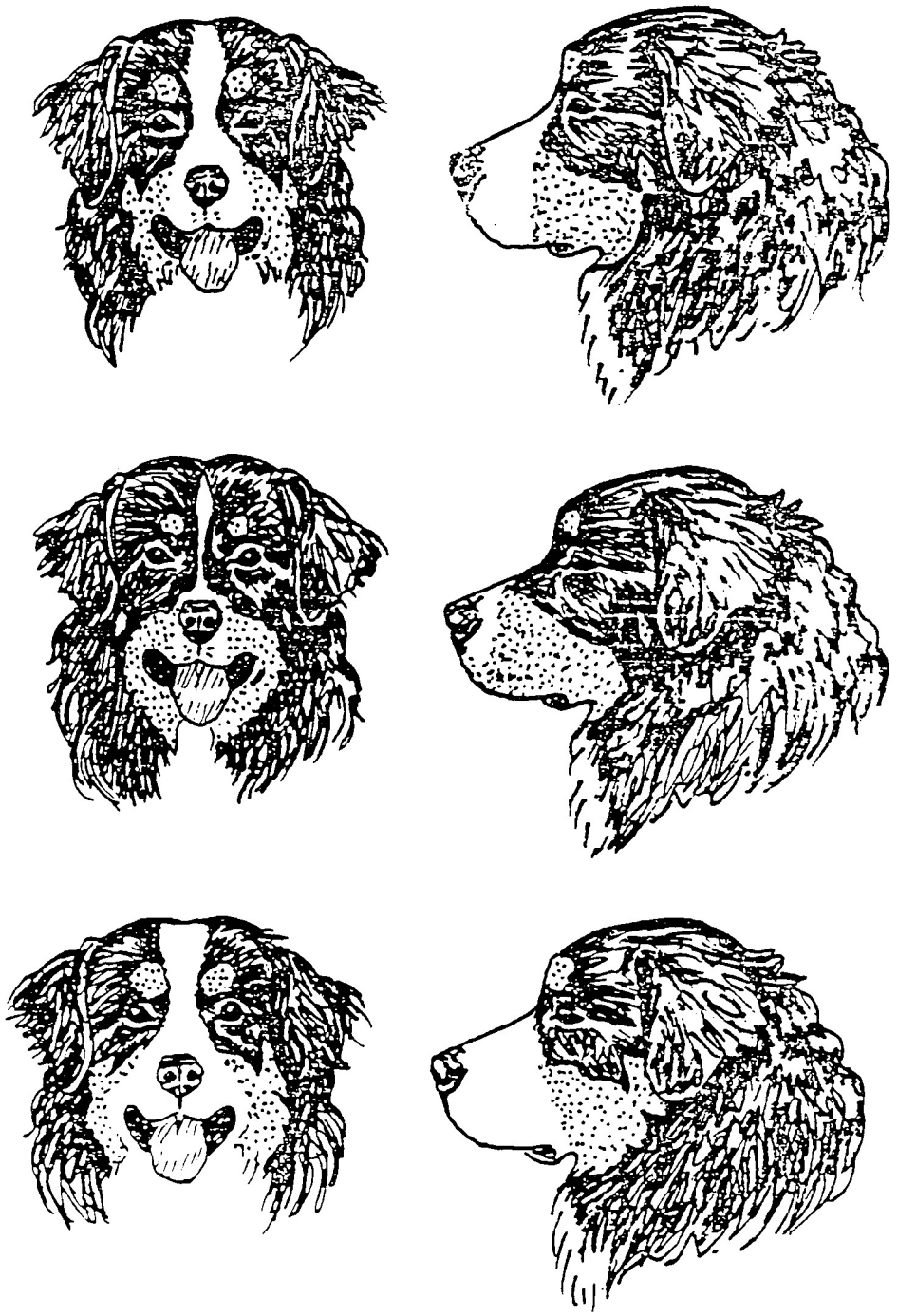
Rust must be present in all of the places described, although some variation is allowed in the area that the rust covers. Some Bernese Mountain Dogs may show white hairs with the rust under the tail. This is minor and should be evaluated accordingly.

There is a white blaze and muzzle band.

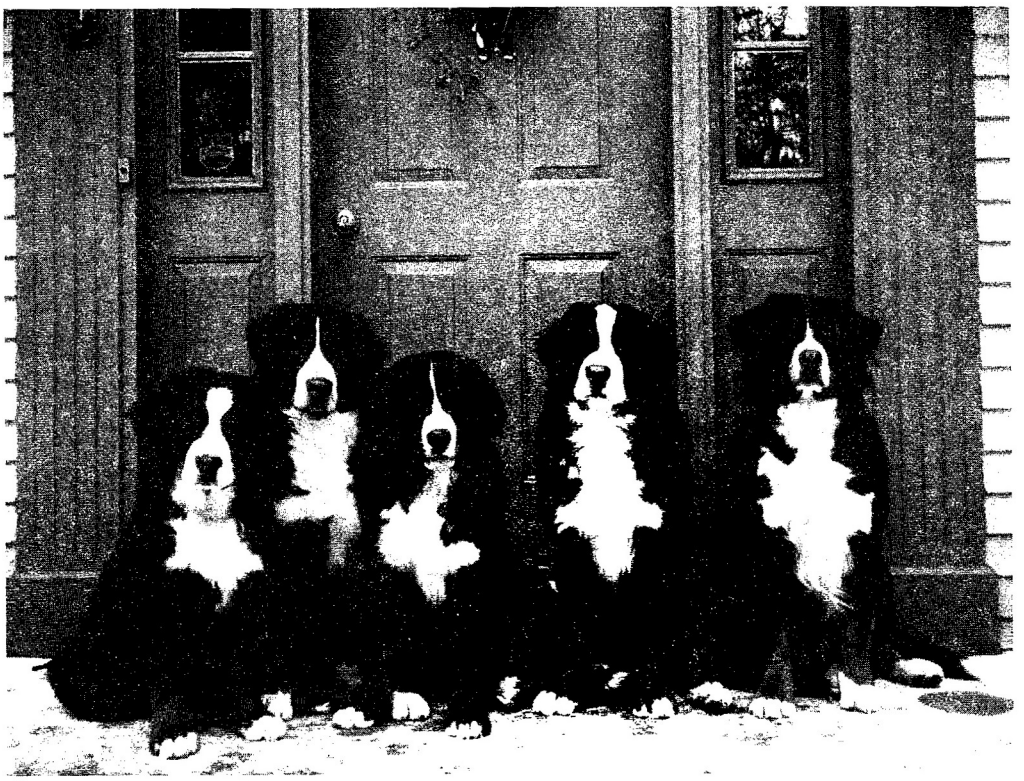
The Standard:

There is a white blaze and muzzle band.

Variation in the extent of white markings on the face is allowed, and indeed results in an interesting variety of faces. However, the white blaze should not extend out to or past the rust eyebrow spots. Ideally the muzzle band does not extend past the back corner of the mouth. Freckles may occur in the muzzle but should not be so abundant as to detract from the overall impression.



All of the markings shown above are acceptable.
The top is preferred.
The middle is a little lacking in white
The bottom is a little heavy in white.



Beautifully marked Bernese

The Standard:

A white marking on the chest typically forms an inverted cross. The tip of the tail is white. White on the feet is desired but must not extend higher than the pasterns. Markings other than described are to be faulted in direct relationship to the extent of the deviation. White legs or a white collar are serious faults.

A white marking on the chest typically forms an inverted cross. This characteristic has caused some consternation among judges. The problem is that the "inverted cross" is obscured in adults by the full chest mane.

The tip of the tail is white. White on the feet is desired but must not extend higher than the pasterns. These markings are like frosting on the cake--they provide an attractive, striking finish to the dog. The white on the feet can extend to the wrist joint in front but should be limited to the toes in back. White should not extend up the legs.

Markings other than described are to be faulted in direct relationship to the extent of the deviation. White legs or a white collar are serious faults.

Some deviation in white or rust markings is normal variation. Small departures from the recommended ideal should be of little concern. The absence, or excess, of white markings should be faulted in accordance with their degree. Thus, no obvious white on the tail tip, or a bit of excess white on the inside of a leg should not be a matter of great concern, whereas white extending up the entire leg past the pastern or hock should be heavily faulted. Black extending into the white chest markings is a minor deviation. Total absence of rust from any of the usual locations is a more serious problem.

Any ground color other than black is a disqualification. Yes, Bernese Mountain Dogs do come in another color. It is a rich brown, with white, but no rust, markings. This is totally atypical of the breed and therefore is a disqualification.

The Standard:

Any ground color other than black is a disqualification.

GAIT

The natural working gait of the Bernese Mountain Dog is a slow trot.

This same slow trot is an excellent gait to use when the dogs are being evaluated. Many a dog that looks flashy at a faster speed will show his true qualities at a slower speed.

However, in keeping with his use in draft and droving work, he is capable of speed and agility. There is good reach in front. Powerful drive from the rear is transmitted through a level back. There is no wasted action. Front and rear legs on each side follow through in the same plane. At increased speed, legs tend to converge toward the center line.

Endurance and power are the hallmarks of Bernese Mountain Dog gait. The efficient, ground covering slow trot is neither heavy and plodding nor elegant and racy. He must appear capable of pulling a load over rough terrain and having enough energy left at the end of the day to bring the cows into the barn.

Remember at all times that this is a *working* dog, unspoiled by the pageantry of the show ring.

The Standard:

The natural working gait of the Bernese Mountain Dog is a slow trot. However, in keeping with his use in draft and droving work, he is capable of speed and agility. There is good reach in front. Powerful drive from the rear is transmitted through a level back. There is no wasted action. Front and rear legs on each side follow through in the same plane. At increased speed, legs tend to converge toward the center line.

TEMPERAMENT

The *temperament* is self-confident, alert and good-natured, never sharp or shy. The Bernese Mountain Dog should stand steady, though may remain aloof to the attentions of strangers.

Bernese Mountain Dogs face the world with an outlook that is calm but alert, interested and kind. One of the delights of a ring full of these dogs is the field of cheerfully wagging tails.

The Standard:

The temperament ***is self-confident, alert and good-natured, never sharp or shy. The Bernese Mountain Dog should stand steady, though may remain aloof to the attentions of strangers.***

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Blue eye color.

Any ground color other than black.

SERIOUS FAULTS

Inverted or everted eyelids.

Overshot or undershot bite.

White legs.

White collar.

OVERALL PICTURE

Bernese Mountain Dogs are magnificent in their rich coloration, beautiful coat, and imposing structure. They are natural, hardy, balanced working dogs, and should be presented in this spirit, without ostentation or elegance. Their magnificence is not of the salon or racecourse but rather of the fields and mountains.

FURTHER READING

Bärtschi, Margaret, and Spengler, Hans Joachim, 1992. ***Hunde Sehen, züchten, erleben: das Buch vom Berner Sennenhund.*** Paul Haupt Verlag, Bern.
The most comprehensive book ever produced on the breed.

Cochrane, Diana, 1981. ***The Bernese Mountain Dog.*** Feoirlinn Publications, Lincolnshire England.
Emphasis on the breed in Britain

Räber, Hans. 1971. ***Die Schweizerhunde-Rassen.*** Müller Verlag, Ruschlikon.
All Swiss breeds.

Simonds, Jude. 1989. ***The Complete Bernese Mountain Dog.*** Howell Book House, Inc., New York.
Well balanced book on care and training, some emphasis on the breed in Britain.

**Sweeter than a Sprüngli Truffle,
more entertaining than a music box . . .
to those of us who love them,
the Bernese Mountain Dog
is the best gift from Switzerland.**

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOGS

(Illustration facing page 299)

Aristocratic in appearance, ancient in lineage, the Bernese Mountain Dog, one of the four varieties of Swiss Mountain Dogs, is a worthy addition to the American Kennel Club Stud-Book. Long-haired and distinctive in coloring, they have never been used to herd sheep as are the other varieties, but instead were used as draught dogs by the weavers of the Canton of Berne, where it was once a common sight to see them drawing to the market place, small wagons loaded with baskets.

These dogs were brought into Switzerland over two thousand years ago by the invading Roman soldiers. However, until a few years before the World War they had been almost forgotten by all save the oldest inhabitants of Berne. They were still used by the weavers but the breed had degenerated to such a marked extent as to be practically unrecognizable, and when in 1892, a Swiss fancier attempted to find good specimens to be used as breeding stock, his search was a long one. However, he was successful and several other fanciers became interested as well. A few good examples were unearthed and the rehabilitation of this worthy dog was started. In 1907, a specialty club was formed and the breed found favor with many wealthy Swiss who have developed them as house pets and companions; their old life in harness being a thing of the past.

The popularity of these Bernese Mountain Dogs has increased so greatly that they are now to be found all

over Switzerland in ever-increasing numbers and the breed entries at dog shows are numerous.

A handsome, long-haired dog about the size of a collie and not unlike him in appearance, the Bernese is jet-black in color, with russet brown or rich tan markings on his forelegs, spots over each eye, on either side of the snowy white chest markings and just above the forelegs. It is highly desirable that these dogs have white feet, white tail-tip, and a pure white blaze on the foreface, as well as white star-shaped markings on the chest. However, it is not disqualifying if these white marks are missing. The coat is long and silky with a slight wave but it must not be curly. An impressive looking dog, 23 to 27½ inches in height for dogs, with bitches slightly smaller, the Bernese is characterized by fiery eyes of dark hazel, V-shaped ears hanging close to the head in repose, but brought slightly forward and raised at the base when alert. His short-backed, compact and well-ribbed up body with broad chest, deep brisket and strong muscular loins show that he is well suited to draught work.

The Bernese is an extremely hardy dog, thriving in an unheated kennel in all weather and needing only a small amount of grooming to look well kept. They are exceptionally faithful animals and once having centered their affection on an individual, they do not fawn upon or make friends with strangers.

A few of these Swiss dogs have been imported into the United States and they and their progeny are expected to be a feature of the bench shows of the future.

DESCRIPTION AND STANDARD OF POINTS

(Adopted by The American Kennel Club, April 13, 1937)

General Appearance.—A well-balanced dog, active and alert; a combination of sagacity, fidelity and utility.

Height.—Dogs, 23 inches to 27½ inches; bitches, 21 inches to 26 inches at shoulder.

Head.—Skull flat, defined stop and strong muzzle. Dewlaps very slightly developed, flews not too pendulous, jaw strong with good, strong teeth. Eyes dark, hazel-brown, full of fire. Ears V-shaped, set on high, not too pointed at tips and rather short. When in repose, hanging close to head; when alert, brought slightly forward and raised at base.

Body.—Rather short than too long in back, compact and well ribbed up. Chest broad with good depth of brisket. Loins strong and muscular.

Legs and Feet.—Forelegs perfectly straight and muscular, thighs well developed and stifles well bent. Feet round and compact. Dewclaws should be removed.

Tail.—Of fair thickness and well covered with long hair, but not to form a flag; moderate length. When in repose, should be carried low, upward swirl permissible; when alert, may be carried gaily, but may never curl or be carried over back.

Coat.—Soft and silky with bright, natural sheen; long and slightly wavy but may never curl.

Color and Markings.—Jet-black with russet-brown or deep tan markings on all four legs, a spot just above forelegs, each side of white chest markings and spots over eyes, which may never be missing. The brown on the forelegs must always be between the black and white.

Preferable, but not a condition, are.—White feet, tip of tail, pure white blaze up foreface, a few white hairs on back of neck, and white star-shaped markings on chest. When the latter markings are missing, it is not a disqualification.

Faults.—Too massive in head, light or staring eyes, too heavy or long ears, too narrow or snipy muzzle, under or overshot mouth, pendulous dewlaps, too long or Setter-like body, splay or hare feet, tail curled or carried over back, cowhocks and white legs.

SCALE OF POINTS

General Appearance	15
Size and Height	5

Head	15
Body	15
Legs and Feet	15
Tail	10
Coat	10
Color and Markings	15
Total	100

BERNESE